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ABSTRACT

The statements of knowledge and skills contained in this manual are the outcome of a collaborative process involving a committee that included the project staff, university level faculty, and a state coordinator of deaf-blind services. The competencies are designed for use as a blueprint for course development and field experiences by university personnel preparation programs in deaf-blindness. Competencies address: (1) effects of deaf-blindness; (2) personal identity, relationships, and self-esteem; (3) concept development; (4) communication; (5) auditory and visual systems; (6) orientation and mobility; (7) environment and materials; and (8) professional issues. The knowledge and skill statements are based on the central assumption that learners who are deaf-blind require highly specialized and personalized teaching approaches. The focus of the knowledge and skills statements is infants, children, and youth who are deaf-blind and their families. The core of the teacher competencies section is the teacher's ability to build a strong, trusting, personal relationship with the learner. The knowledge and skills statements are not specific to ages or educational placements. An appendix contains the Council for Exceptional Children's "Common Core of Knowledge and Skills Essential for All Beginning Special Education Teachers." (CR)

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Competencies for Teachers of Learners Who Are Deafblind

Perkins National Deafblind Training Project

Barbara A.B. McLetchie
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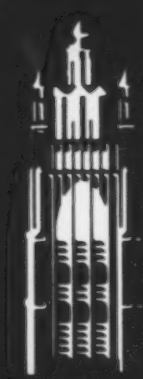

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Competencies for Teachers of Learners Who Are Deafblind

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INTRODUCTION

The statements of knowledge and skills contained in the following ***Competencies for Teachers of Learners Who Are Deafblind*** are based on the central assumption that learners who are deafblind require highly specialized and personalized teaching approaches. The authors acknowledge and accept the Common Core of Competencies endorsed by the Council for Exceptional Children (Appendix). However, teachers of learners who are deafblind must have additional specialized competencies in order to provide their students with quality educational opportunities. Although children who are deafblind have the same basic needs as all children, they have complex and unique challenges. The uniqueness of deafblindness is supported by the federal definition of deafblindness. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, PL 101-476, defines infants, toddlers, children and youth who are deafblind as

> ...having auditory and visual impairments, the combination of which creates such severe communication and other developmental and learning needs that they cannot be appropriately educated in special education programs solely for children and youth with hearing impairments, visual impairments, or severe disabilities, without supplementary assistance to address their educational needs due to these dual concurrent disabilities (PL 101-476, 20 USC, Chapter 33, Section 1422 [2]).

It is important to note that the majority of learners who are deafblind have some residual use of either or both of the distance senses -- vision and hearing. Other learners may have no usable vision or hearing. Some may have additional challenges, including physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities. Although learners who are deafblind are a heterogeneous population, they all share communication challenges and the potential isolating effects of combined vision and hearing losses.

Deafblindness is not the sum total of a vision loss plus a hearing loss. The combination of these sensory losses, to whatever degree, or in combination with additional disabilities, creates highly unique challenges. Vision and hearing interrelate to connect people with the world and are the primary avenues through which most people learn. Vision and hearing act as the prime motivators of social interactions.

At the heart of the following knowledge and skills statements are infants, children and youth who are deafblind and their families. At the core of the teacher competencies is the teacher's ability to build a strong, trusting, personal relationship with the learner. Based upon a trusting relationship, teachers can use their specialized competencies in deafblindness to assist the learner in developing his or her own personal and social competence.

Some knowledge and skills statements, if read only at face value, could apply to teaching all children. However, knowledge and skill in these areas are especially critical in teaching learners who are deafblind. Learners who are deafblind do not learn incidentally. They must be carefully and thoughtfully taught what other children learn informally through overhearing, observing, and naturally interacting with others.

The following knowledge and skill statements are not specific to ages or educational placement. They are not prioritized according to their relative importance. Some knowledge statements have no associated skills, while others have several. These factors have no relationship to the importance of the knowledge statement. The term *learner*, whether it is specifically stated or not, implies the learner who is deafblind. Each learner requires a highly individualized approach depending upon his or her strengths and needs.

The *Competencies* are the outcome of a collaborative process involving a committee which included the staff of this project, university level faculty, and a state coordinator of deafblind services. All were recognized experts in the field. This final set of competencies was revised based upon an extensive field review process. The full range of these competencies can be used as a blueprint for course development and field experiences by university personnel preparation programs in deafblindness. Although not all teachers will serve the diverse population of infants, children and youth who are deafblind, it is critical that they have the large picture of the needs of people who are deafblind. Therefore, qualified teachers must have basic competency in all of the areas addressed in the knowledge and skill statements. Subsets of the competencies may be used in in-service training to meet the needs of an individual child or groups of infants, children and youth who are deafblind.

The authors assume that teachers are effective team collaborators and that the learning opportunities teachers provide to infants, children and youth who are deafblind are of high quality and respect the dignity of the learner and his or her family.

***

DEAFBLINDNESS

1 Knowledge:

The critical roles of vision and hearing in all learning (e.g. communication, concept development, motor development, movement).

2 Knowledge:

The complex and unique effects of combined vision and hearing losses upon all learners who are deafblind (e.g., communication, challenges in accessing information, orientation and mobility).

3 Knowledge:

The diversity within the population of learners who are deafblind (e.g. differing etiologies, varying ages of onset of deafblindness, varying degrees of vision and hearing losses, additional disabilities).

4 Knowledge:

The potential isolating effects of combined hearing and vision losses upon the learner who is deafblind.

5 Knowledge:

The potential impact of the combined effects of hearing and vision losses upon the learner's opportunities for incidental learning (e.g. learning without being formally taught [learning through observing, overhearing, playing, interacting with others]).

6 Knowledge:

The potential emotional implications of combined hearing and vision losses upon the learner who is deafblind (e.g. depression associated with progressive vision loss, loneliness).

7 Knowledge:

The potential impact of combined hearing and vision losses upon the learner's personal relationships with others (e.g., interactions with family members, establishing social relationships).

8 Knowledge:

The potential and complex effects of additional disabilities upon learners who are deafblind (e.g., physical disabilities, medical conditions and cognitive challenges).

9 Knowledge:

The potential effects of the age of onset, degrees and/or progression of hearing and vision losses upon learners who are deafblind (e.g., communication, language acquisition, orientation and mobility and emotional well-being).

10 Knowledge:

The major etiologies of deafblindness (e.g., viral infections, CHARGE Association, prematurity, Usher Syndrome) and the possible implications of etiologies in teaching the learner who is deafblind.

10.1 Skill:

- Access resources of etiologies.

PERSONAL IDENTITY, RELATIONSHIPS AND SELF-ESTEEM

11 Knowledge:

The potential impact of deafblindness upon attachment/bonding between learners who are deafblind and their primary caregivers.

11.1 Skill:

- Assess and explain the effects of combined vision and hearing losses upon relationships between the learner and his/her primary caregiver.

11.2 Skill:

- Establish a trusting relationship with the learner who is deafblind by providing nurturance and consistency in people, interactions, and routines.

11.3 Skill:

- Use touch to accommodate for lack of or distortion of visual and auditory information (e.g., use touch to substitute for mutual eye gaze).

12 Knowledge:

The development of body image in learners who are deafblind.

12.1 Skill:

- Move together (co-actively) with the learner in daily routines to establish body awareness and awareness of another person (e.g., walking together, dressing, eating, exercising).

12.2 Skill:

- Use touch to make the learner aware of his/her body and another's throughout functional and play activities (e.g., clapping games, letting the learner touch his/her arm and another's before putting a shirt on).

12.3 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to learn the functions of body parts (e.g., touching learner's ear when there is a loud noise, letting the learner feel another person's face while chewing).

12.4 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner's increased proprioceptive (feedback through muscles and body position) and kinesthetic (feedback through body movement) awareness during daily routines and planned activities (e.g., carrying light and heavy articles, exercising).

13 Knowledge:

Development of the learner's personal identity and relationships to another person or a group (e.g. son, daughter, classmate).

13.1 Skill:

- Use personalized visual, auditory and tactile forms to identify the person who is initiating the interaction with the learner (e.g., mother speaks to baby while letting him/her feel her face to identify herself; the teacher lets the child feel his/her bracelet and uses a name sign while saying his/her name).

13.2 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to recognize himself/herself and others by name (e.g., touch cue, object cue, picture, name sign, spoken name).

13.3 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to learn about family relationships and relationships to others (e.g., use family pictures to identify family members, use an object cue to identify a friend).

13.4 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to understand the role of him/herself and others in the contexts of specific groups (e.g., participating in household tasks with other family members, sharing classroom jobs with classmates, going out to eat to celebrate an event with friends).

14 Knowledge:

Development of positive self-esteem in the learner who is deafblind.

14.1 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to develop confidence by making choices (e.g., choosing from a selection of shirts with different patterns and textures, choosing friends).

14.2 Skill:

- Provide the learner with opportunities for self-advocacy (e.g., walking from the bus to the classroom independently, asking for assistance, choosing an interpreter, choosing a job/career).

14.3 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to learn from naturally occurring successes and failures.

14.4 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to meet and establish relationships with other people who are deafblind (e.g., attending summer camp with others who are deafblind, attending deafblind social groups, using computers to interact with other people who are deafblind).

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

15 Knowledge:

The potential impact of the combined effects of vision and hearing losses upon the development of concrete and abstract concepts.

15.1 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to develop basic concepts through participation in meaningful and motivating real life experiences (e.g., learning about animals through experiences with real animals, shopping for and preparing food).

15.2 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to actively explore and experience common objects that learners with vision and hearing learn about incidentally (e.g., eating and cooking utensils, cupboard doors, portable phones, light switches).

15.3 Skill:

- Tactually model for the learner the functional use of objects (e.g., put learner's hands over teacher's hands to learn how to eat from a spoon, turn on faucets, the entire process of washing clothes).

15.4 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to understand and express abstract concepts (e.g., calendar systems to learn about time, objects or pictures that represent feelings).

COMMUNICATION

16 Knowledge:

The development of communication partnerships between learners who are deafblind and others.

16.1 Skill:

- Establish a secure, respectful, trusting relationship with the learner.

16.2 Skill:

- Assess and adapt to learner's pace/timing of communication (e.g., consider physical limitations, vision and hearing losses, processing time, motor planning, medical conditions).

16.3 Skill:

- Create opportunities for turn-taking (e.g., taking turns playing with a toy, cutting vegetables, playing games, conversing).

16.4 Skill:

- Create opportunities for the learner to initiate conversations with or without words around topics of interest (e.g., learner taps table and teacher taps table in the same pattern; learner signs a child's name and teacher and learner have a conversation about a friend).

16.5 Skill:

- Exchange information about the learner's communication style/abilities with others to ensure consistency of interpretation and use of the learner's communication repertoire.

16.6 Skill:

- Teach significant peers and adults to communicate effectively with the learner who is deafblind (e.g., through modeling and use of specific modes of communication such as tactile cues, objects, or sign language).

17 Knowledge:

Visual, auditory, and tactile adaptations that enhance social/communicative interactions between the learner who is deafblind and others.

17.1 Skill:

- Use appropriate distance between the learner and the communication partner (e.g., modifications to accommodate for visual field losses, acuity, and hearing impairment).

17.2 Skill:

- Determine optimal position of the learner in relation to others that will enhance participation in group activities (e.g., distance to read signs visually and/or tactually, to hear conversations, and possible need for the learner to make and maintain physical contact with people).

17.3 Skill:

- Maintain interaction at eye level of learner who is deafblind or make adjustment to accommodate for specific visual conditions (e.g. maintain interaction below learner's eye level to accommodate for an upper field loss).

17.4 Skill:

- Use touch cues to initiate and terminate interactions (e.g., touching shoulder or back of hand to initiate contact).

17.5 Skill:

- Interpret for the learner information about other interactions and events taking place around him/her (e.g., identify who is talking, the topics of conversations, who has entered or left the room).

17.6 Skill:

- Assess how choice of color, textures, and patterns of clothing enhance or detract from social interaction (e.g., avoid busy patterns, wear colors that contrast with hands for signing, wear colors that learner may prefer to motivate attention).

17.7 Skill:

- Reduce or eliminate unnecessary visual, auditory and tactile clutter (e.g., background chatter, radios, TV's, and disorganized materials and equipment) that may detract from the learner's ability to interact effectively with people.

18 Knowledge:

Non-linguistic forms/modes of communication used by learners who are deafblind.

18.1 Skill:

- Assess non-linguistic forms of communication (e.g., changes in respiration or body tone, facial expressions, laughing, crying).

18.2 Skill:

- Assess and interpret as intentional non-intentional behaviors (e.g., learner randomly touches yogurt among several food items, teacher implies a choice and gives yogurt to the child).

18.3 Skill:

- Assess and interpret the meaning of the learner's use of objects (e.g., gets coat to indicate desire to go outside, puts brush on hair).

18.4 Skill:

- Develop object communication systems (e.g., object calendars, object boards, pouches with objects) for the learner to use receptively and expressively.

18.5 Skill:

- Provide objects for the learner to anticipate activities, adjust to change within activities, and to terminate activities (e.g., use objects that are associated with activities).

18.6 Skill:

- Assess and interpret the meaning of the learner's intentional use of signals to communicate (e.g., pushing objects away to indicate a desire to stop an activity, reaching or touching an object to indicate a desire for the object, pushing or pulling another person to a desired place or object).

18.7 Skill:

- Assess and interpret the meaning of the learner's natural gestures to communicate (e.g., guiding the hand of a communication partner to reach a desired object, pointing to a person within the visual field).

19 Knowledge:

Linguistic forms/modes of communication used by learners who are deafblind.

19.1 Skill:

- Use formal sign language systems, both visually and tactually.

19.2 Skill:

- Use alphabet systems, both tactually and visually (e.g., fingerspelling, print on palm, alphabet block letters, braille on palm).

19.3 Skill:

- Use the Tadoma method of speech reading (e.g., the learner feels the vibrations of the speaker's lips, face, throat to understand speech).

19.4 Skill:

- Respond to the learner's non-linguistic forms of communication while fostering opportunities to move to linguistic levels (e.g., accept pushing toy away and model the "finished" sign).

19.5 Skill:

- Develop strategies to encourage the learner to use multiple non-linguistic and linguistic modes/forms of communication depending upon the environment and communication partner(s) (e.g., learner may use sign language as a preferred mode of communication but may use a picture communication book or write notes to communicate with people who do not know sign language).

20 Knowledge:

The possible communicative functions of behaviors of learners who are deafblind (e.g., gaining attention, requesting, rejecting, commenting, asking questions, greeting).

20.1 Skill:

- Assess and respond to the communicative functions of positive and challenging behaviors/forms (e.g., light gazing may indicate that the learner rejects the activity; this prompts the teacher to shift to a more motivating activity, and the light gazing stops).

21 Knowledge:

The development of vocabulary (content) in learners who are deafblind, based upon their forms and functions of communication.

21.1 Skill:

- Select and prioritize receptive and expressive vocabulary that is meaningful and motivating to the learner (e.g., utilize ecological inventories, and assess learner's preferences).

21.2 Skill:

- Model the use of vocabulary words that are meaningful and motivating to the learner.

21.3 Skill:

- Provide vocabulary for the learner to understand and express abstract concepts (e.g., utilize pictures or gestures to symbolize happiness, loneliness, fear, dreams, clouds and stars).

21.4 Skill:

- Provide opportunities to use and expand vocabulary through frequent and natural conversations (e.g., the learner and another person both initiate and respond to one another during a conversation about a favorite person).

21.5 Skill:

- Organize vocabulary into syntax (e.g., ASL, English)

22 Knowledge:

Development of literacy in learners who are deafblind.

22.1 Skill:

- Incorporate literacy as part of the everyday activities according to the learner's experiences and interests (e.g., label objects, places, people and events with print or braille [use experience story books, journals]).

22.2 Skill:

- Modify existing reading materials to adjust for the learner's language level and reading media (e.g., make language used in a news story less complex, use large print).

23 Knowledge:

Informal and formal communication assessment procedures that are appropriate for learners who are deafblind.

23.1 Skill:

- Assess contexts (physical environments, people, things and events) in which the learner who is deafblind communicates.

23.2 Skill:

- Assess the communication opportunities and demands in specific contexts (e.g., home environment, doctor's office, stores and restaurants).

23.3 Skill:

- Select, adapt and/or create tools and procedures appropriate for the communication assessment of the learner who is deafblind (e.g., checklists [Callier Azusa Scale] and observation protocols, interviews).

23.4 Skill:

- Gather and maintain descriptive records/portfolios of the learner's communication repertoire (e.g., unintentional, non-linguistic and linguistic) across all settings to assess strengths, challenges, progress.

23.5 Skill:

- Exchange on-going communication assessment findings with others (e.g., family and other team members) to develop effective strategies that will enhance the learner's communication abilities.

24 Knowledge:

Communication devices and technology that are appropriate for learners who are deafblind.

24.1 Skill:

- Design and make non-technological communication devices that are appropriate to the learner's needs (e.g., object calendar systems, object displays, picture books or boards, print or braille alphabet boards).

24.2 Skill:

- Select and/or adapt assistive technological devices as tools for communication (e.g., vibrating switches that activate closed loop tapes with messages, TDD with braille output for telephone communication).

24.3 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to use augmentative communication devices in a variety of environments and with a variety of communication partners (e.g., picture books to order at a restaurant, computer with voice output in a classroom).

24.4 Skill:

- Access resources for alternative and augmentative communication assessment and communication devices (e.g., speech and language therapists, communication disorders clinics, vendors of communication devices).

25 Knowledge:

The need for learners who are deafblind to have communication embedded/incorporated in all activities and settings (e.g., home, school, community).

25.1 Skill:

- Assess activities for their communication opportunities and implement appropriate strategies (e.g., wait for the learner to request a drink rather than refilling glass immediately, place preferred object out of reach; leave an object out of a calendar box, do work tasks in a turn-taking manner).

25.2 Skill:

- Provide opportunities and means for the learner to communicate within and about activities, places and (e.g., use of objects, calendars, diaries, experience books, signs, speech in conversations).

25.3 Skill:

- Use naturally occurring events for the learner to use and practice communication skills.

26 Knowledge:

Effective use of communication support personnel (e.g., speech/language therapists, interpreters, intervenors, paraprofessionals) to assure that the learner who is deafblind has optimal access to opportunities for receptive and expressive communication.

26.1 Skill:

- Identify the responsibilities and the roles of the communication support personnel according to the needs of the learner and environments (e.g., a learner who communicates with objects may not need an ASL interpreter; a learner who is educated in a signing environment may need an individual interpreter for participation in the community).

27 Knowledge:

Communication and language theories, approaches and research that are applicable to teaching learners who are deafblind (e.g., from linguistics, general education, special education, education of the deaf and hard of hearing, education of the blind and visually impaired and education of learners who are deafblind).

27.1 Skill:

- Access and evaluate current related research and practices in communication for their possible relevance in teaching the learner.

HEARING-VISION

28 Knowledge:

The structure and function of auditory and visual systems and how they interrelate in the learning process.

29 Knowledge:

Impairments in the structure and the function of the auditory and visual systems.

29.1 Skill:

- Assess and explain educational implications of visual and auditory impairments upon the learner.

30 Knowledge:

Clinical, functional and legal definitions of deafblindness, blindness/visual impairment, deafness/hearing loss.

30.1 Skill:

- Use of definitions of deafblindness, blindness/visual impairment, and deafness/hearing impairment (e.g., eligibility criteria) to access services, materials and assistance for the learner.

31 Knowledge:

Functional and clinical assessments of vision and hearing.

31.1 Skill:

- Identify, adapt, or develop strategies to assess the learner's functional use of vision and hearing.

31.2 Skill:

- Assess how the learner processes auditory and visual information (e.g., assess preferred learning modalities, assess processing time in different modalities).

32 Knowledge

Clinical assessments of vision and hearing that are used by learners who are deafblind (e.g., evoked potentials, preferential looking, behavioral audiometry, electro-retinography).

32.1 Skill:

- Interpret for other team members clinical and functional information regarding the learner's vision and hearing (e.g., vision and hearing losses, processing, visual field losses, and ocular-motor information).

32.2 Skill:

- Recommend appropriate positions to optimize visual functioning (e.g., learner in an adapted chair, learner's location in a room, and light sources).

32.3 Skill:

- Recommend appropriate positions to optimize auditory functioning (e.g., head in midline, better ear toward sound source).

32.4 Skill:

- Implement strategies to accommodate for and to improve the learner's visual and auditory functioning based upon assessment results (e.g., use appropriate color/size, decrease background noise).

32.5 Skill:

- Recommend the learner for additional visual and auditory evaluations/assessments when necessary.

33 Knowledge:

Assistive listening (e.g., hearing aids, FM systems), low vision (e.g., magnifiers) and vibro-tactile devices (e.g., vibrating alarm) that enhance auditory and visual functioning.

33.1 Skill:

- Recommend appropriate referrals to low vision and hearing specialists in collaboration with other team members to assess the need for assistive devices.

33.2 Skill:

- Operate and maintain hearing aids, FM systems and vibro-tactile devices (based upon the recommendations of the audiologist and other team members).

33.3 Skill:

- Assess situations and environments in which the learner can benefit from use of FM systems (based upon the recommendations of the audiologist and other team members).

33.4 Skill:

- Check and maintain glasses, contact lenses, and low vision devices (based upon the recommendations from the eye care specialist and other team members).

33.5 Skill:

- Teach the learner (based upon the recommendations from the eye care specialists and other team members) to use appropriate optical aids (e.g., magnifier, CCTV) and non-optical low vision devices (e.g., felt-tip pen, reading stand, lamp, etc.) for near and distant tasks.

ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY

34 Knowledge:

The influence of vision and hearing in motor development.

35 Knowledge:

The basic principles of orientation and mobility for learners who are deafblind.

35.1 Skill:

- Assess, describe and explain the effects of vision and hearing losses upon the learner's movements (e.g., reaching, crawling, walking).

35.2 Skill:

- Collaborate with Orientation and Mobility specialists and other appropriate specialists (e.g., occupational therapists, physical therapists) in adapting strategies to encourage the learner to move safely and independently.

35.3 Skill:

- Assist the learner in organizing information about space and objects within space (e.g., consistent placement of furniture and toys in a bedroom).

35.4 Skill:

- Model ways for the learner to move in and through space (using vision, auditory cues, and tactile cues).

35.5 Skill:

- Provide opportunities for the learner to move outward in progressively larger spaces (e.g., house, neighborhood, community).

35.6 Skill

- Adapt orientation and mobility techniques according to the learner's communication skills and ability to use residual hearing and vision (e.g., instructions given tactually, replacing auditory cues with tactual cues).

35.7 Skill

- Provide opportunities for the learner who is deafblind and has physical disabilities to learn orientation and mobility skills (e.g. teaching the learner in a wheelchair to trail a wall).

35.8 Skill:

- Assess the proprioceptive and kinesthetic variables in the environment (e.g., resistance, weight, angle of a surface).

35.9 Skill:

- Teach the learner to attend to kinesthetic and proprioceptive variables to inform him/her about how his/her body relates to the environment (e.g., change body positioning to walk up or down a hill).

36 Knowledge:

Technology to enhance orientation and mobility skills (e.g., electronic travel aids).

ENVIRONMENT AND MATERIALS

37 Knowledge:

Visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory information in various environments that influence learning.

37.1 Skill:

- Assess the visual variables in the environment that influence the learner's effective use of vision (e.g., color, contrast, size, distance, timing, clutter, lighting, glare).

37.2 Skill:

- Make appropriate visual adaptations to accommodate for specific visual impairments (e.g., reduce lighting for learners with colobomas, increased lighting in dark areas for learners with Retinitis Pigmentosa).

37.3 Skill:

- Assess variables within specific environments that influence the learner's use of hearing (e.g., curtains, carpeting, tile floors, concrete walls, ceilings, noise from air conditioners, radios, TV's, chairs moving in a classroom, loud talking, and public address systems in classrooms).

37.4 Skill:

- Make appropriate adaptations to enhance the learner's auditory functioning in a variety of physical environments (e.g., background noise reduction, volume modification, and adjustment of room acoustics [addition of carpet, draperies etc.]).

37.5 Skill:

- Assess the tactile variables within the environment (e.g., temperature, vibration, texture, shape, size and density).

37.6 Skill:

- Use contrasting tactile cues or adaptations to assist the learner in gaining information about the environment (e.g., texture cues, landmarks, varied textures used on walls and floors, braille labels).

37.7 Skill:

- Draw the attention of the learner to the sources of naturally occurring vibrations and smells in the environment (e.g., washing machine, vacuum, blender, wheelchair being pushed across different surfaces, swimming pool, lunch room).

38 Knowledge:

Technological devices and appliances for independent living.

38.1 Skill:

- Access sources of devices and appliances that will enhance the learner's ability to live as independently as possible.

38.2 Skill:

- Use and adapt appropriate devices and appliances (e.g., strobe alarms, vibrating alert systems for smoke, doorbells, voice etc.).

39 Knowledge:

Visual, auditory and tactile characteristics of materials needed by learners who are deafblind.

39.1 Skill:

- Based upon clinical and functional assessments, use and create materials that will maximize the learner's use of vision, hearing and touch in specific situations (e.g., bold lined drawings, tape recordings, tactual maps and object calendars, print size, spacing, colored markers, fluorescent or brightly colored tape, beeper balls) to meet the learner's visual, auditory and tactile needs.

PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

40 Knowledge:

The history of the practices, people and events that have impacted or impact the lives of people who are deafblind and their possible relevance to current educational practices.

41 Knowledge:

Resources that provide technical assistance at the local, state, and national levels related to the field of deafblindness.

42 Knowledge:

Resources of support services (e.g., interpreters, counselors, intervenors) for learners who are deafblind and their families.

43 Knowledge:

Curricula specific to or adapted for learners who are deafblind (e.g., daily living skills, vocational, early intervention).

44 Knowledge:

Specialized roles of educators of learners who are deafblind.

44.1 Skill:

- Consult and collaborate with others who provide care, education, and adult services to people who are deafblind.

44.2 Skill:

- Provide information and education to team members (including families) about the uniqueness of the disability of deafblindness.

44.3 Skill:

- Provide training to caregivers, school personnel and peers that will improve the quality of their interactions/relationships with the learner who is deafblind.

44.4 Skill:

- Advocate for learners who are deafblind and their families to obtain quality services ranging from early intervention to transition to adult services.

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APPENDIX

Excerpt from: *What Every Special Educator Must Know: The International Standards for the Preparation and Certification of Special Education Teachers,*(1995). Reston, Virginia, **The Council for Exceptional Children**, 62-80.

Copied with permission from: The Council for Exceptional Children, 1920 Association Drive, Reston, VA 22091.

COMMON CORE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ESSENTIAL FOR ALL BEGINNING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Guidelines

CC: Common Core
1. Philosophical, Historical and Legal Foundations of Special Education

Knowledge:

K1 Models, theories, and philosophies that provide the basis for special education practice.

K2 Variations in beliefs, traditions, and values across cultures within society and the effect of the relationship among child, family, and schooling.

K3 Issues in definition and identification procedures for individuals with exceptional learning needs including individuals from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

K4 Assurances and due process rights related to assessment, eligibility, and placement.

K5 Rights and responsibilities of parents, students, teachers and other professionals, and schools as they relate to individuals with learning needs.

Skills:

S1 Articulate personal philosophy of special education including its relationship to/with regular education.

S2 Conduct instructional and other professional activities consistent with the requirements of law, rules and regulations, and local district policies and procedures.

CC: Common Core
2. Characteristics of Learners

Knowledge:

K1 Similarities and differences among the cognitive, physical, cultural, social, and emotional needs of individuals with and without exceptional learning needs.

K2 Differential characteristics of individuals with exceptionalities, including levels of severity and multiple exceptionalities.

K3 Characteristics of normal, delayed, and disordered communication patterns of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

K4 Effects an exceptional condition(s) may have on an individual's life.

K5 Characteristics and effects of the cultural and environmental milieu of the child and the family including cultural and linguistic diversity, socioeconomic level, abuse/neglect, and substance abuse.

K6 Effects of various medications on the educational, cognitive, physical, social, and emotional behavior of individuals with exceptionalities.

K7 Educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities.

Skills:

S1 Access information on various cognitive, communication, physical, cultural, social and emotional conditions of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

CC: Common Core
3. Assessment, Diagnosis and Evaluation

Knowledge:

K1 Basic terminology used in assessment.

K2 Ethical concerns related to assessment.

K3 Legal provisions, regulations, and guidelines regarding assessment of individuals.

K4 Typical procedures used for screening, prereferral, referral, and classification.

K5 Appropriate application and interpretation of scores, including grade score versus standard score, percentile ranks, age/grade equivalents, and stanines.

K6 Appropriate use and limitations of each type of assessment instrument.

K7 Incorporation of strategies that consider the influence of diversity on assessment, eligibility, programming, and placement of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

K8 The relationship between assessment and placement decisions.

K9 Methods for monitoring progress of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Skills:

S1 Collaborate with families and other professionals involved in the assessment of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

S2 Create and maintain records.

S3 Gather background information regarding academic, medical, and family history.

S4 Use various types of assessment procedures appropriately.

S5 Interpret information from formal and informal assessment instruments and procedures.

S6 Report assessment results to individuals with exceptional learning needs, parents, administrators, and other professionals using appropriate communication skills.

S7 Use performance data and information from teachers, other professionals, individuals with exceptionalities, and parents to make or suggest appropriate modification in learning environments.

S8 Develop individualized assessment strategies for instruction.

S9 Use assessment information in making instructional decisions and planning individual programs that result in appropriate placement and intervention for all individuals with exceptional learning needs, including those from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.

S10 Evaluate the results of instruction.

S11 Evaluate supports needed for integration into various program placements.

CC: Common Core
4. Instructional Content and Practice

Knowledge:

K1 Differing learning styles of individuals with exceptional learning needs and how to adapt teaching to these styles.

K2 Demands of various learning environments such as individualized instruction in general education classes.

K3 Curricula for the development of motor, cognitive, academic, social, language, affective and functional life skills for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

K4 Instructional and remedial methods, techniques, and curriculum materials.

K5 Techniques for modifying instructional methods and materials.

K6 Life skills instruction relevant to independent, community, and personal living and employment.

K7 Cultural perspectives influencing the relationship among families, schools, and communities as related to effective instruction for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Skills:

S1 Interpret and use assessment data for instructional planning.

S2 Develop and/or select instructional content, materials, resources, and strategies that respond to cultural, linguistic, and gender differences.

S3 Develop comprehensive, longitudinal individualized programs.

S4 Choose and use appropriate technologies to accomplish instructional objectives and to integrate them appropriately into the instructional process.

S5 Prepare appropriate lesson plans.

S6 Involve the individual and family in setting instructional goals and charting progress.

S7 Conduct and use task analysis.

S8 Select, adapt, and use instructional strategies and materials according to characteristics of the learner.

S9 Sequence, implement, and evaluate individual learning objectives.

S10 Integrate affective, social, and career/vocational skills with academic curricula.

S11 Use strategies for facilitating maintenance and generalization of skills across learning environments.

S12 Use instructional time properly.

S13 Teach individuals with exceptional learning needs to use thinking, problem-solving, and other cognitive strategies to meet their individual needs.

S14 Choose and implement instructional techniques and strategies that promote successful transitions for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

S15 Establish and maintain rapport with learners.

S16 Use verbal and nonverbal communication techniques.

S17 Conduct self-evaluation of instruction.

CC: Common Core
5. Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment

Knowledge:

K1 Basic classroom management theories, methods, and techniques for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

K2 Research-based best practices for effective management of teaching and learning.

K3 Ways in which technology can assist with planning and managing the teaching and learning environment.

Skills:

S1 Create a safe, positive, and supportive learning environment in which diversities are valued.

S2 Use strategies and techniques for facilitating the functional integration of individuals with exceptional learning needs in various settings.

S3 Prepare and organize materials to implement daily lesson plans.

S4 Incorporate evaluation, planning, and management procedures that match learner needs with the instructional environment.

S5 Design a learning environment that encourages active participation by learners in a variety of individual and group learning activities.

S6 Design, structure, and manage daily routines, effectively including transition time for students, other staff, and the instructional setting.

S7 Direct the activities of a classroom paraprofessional, aide, volunteer, or peer tutor.

S8 Create an environment that encourages self-advocacy and increased independence.

CC: Common Core
6. Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills

Knowledge:

K1 Applicable laws, rules and regulations, and procedural safeguards regarding the planning and implementation of management of behaviors of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

K2 Ethical considerations inherent in classroom behavior management.

K3 Teacher attitudes and behaviors that positively or negatively influence behavior of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

K4 Social skills needed for educational and functional living environments and effective instruction in the development of social skills.

K5 Strategies for crisis prevention/intervention.

K6 Strategies for preparing individuals to live harmoniously and productively in a multiclass, multiethnic, multicultural, and multinational world.

Skills:

S1 Demonstrate a variety of effective behavior management techniques appropriate to the needs of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

S2 Implement the least intensive intervention consistent with the needs of the individuals with exceptionalities.

S3 Modify the learning environment (schedule and physical arrangement) to manage inappropriate behaviors.

S4 Identify realistic expectations for personal and social behavior in various settings.

S5 Integrate social skills into the curriculum.

S6 Use effective teaching procedures in social skills instruction.

S7 Demonstrate procedures to increase the individual's self-awareness, self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem.

S8 Prepare individuals with exceptional learning needs to exhibit self-enhancing behavior in response to societal attitudes and actions.

CC: Common Core
7. Communication and Collaborative Partnerships

Knowledge:

K1 Factors that promote effective communication and collaboration with individuals, parents, and school and community personnel in a culturally responsive program.

K2 Typical concerns of parents of individuals with exceptional learning needs and appropriate strategies to help parents deal with these concerns.

K3 Development of individual student programs working in collaboration with team members.

K4 Roles of individuals with exceptionalities, parents, teachers, and other school and community personnel in planning an individualized program.

K5 Ethical practices for confidential communication to others about individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Skills:

S1 Use collaborative strategies in working with individuals with exceptional learning needs, parents, and school and community personnel in various learning environments.

S2 Communicate and consult with individuals, parents, teachers, and other school and community personnel.

S3 Foster respectful and beneficial relationships between families and professionals.

S4 Encourage and assist families to become more active participants in the educational team.

S5 Plan and conduct collaborative conferences with families or primary caregivers.

S6 Collaborate with regular classroom teachers and other school and community personnel in integrating individuals with exceptional learning needs into various learning environments.

S7 Communicate with regular teachers, administrators, and other school personnel about characteristics and needs of individuals with specific exceptional learning needs.

CC: Common Core
8. Professionalism and Ethical Practices

Knowledge:

K1 Personal cultural biases and differences that affect one's teaching.

K2 Importance of the teacher serving as a model for individuals with exceptional learning needs.

Skills:

S1 Demonstrate commitment to developing the highest educational and quality-of-life potential of individuals with exceptional learning needs.

S2 Demonstrate positive regard for the culture, religion, gender, and sexual orientation of individual students.

S3 Promote and maintain a high level of competence and integrity in the practice of the profession.

S4 Exercise objective professional judgment in the practice of the profession.

S5 Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication.

S6 Engage in professional activities that may benefit individuals with exceptional learning needs, their families, and/or colleagues.

S7 Comply with local, state, provincial, and federal monitoring and evaluation requirements.

S8 Use copyrighted educational materials in an ethical manner.

S9 Practice within the CEC Code of Ethics and other standards and policies of the profession.

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For further information about *Competencies for Teachers of Learners Who Are Deafblind*, please contact:

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